

STATEMENT BY

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for the Apollo 13 Review Board Press Conference
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On April 17, 1970 Dr. George Low and I established the Apollo 13 Review Board under the direction of Mr. Edgar M. Cortright, Director of the Langley Research Center. The instructions to the Board are contained in a Memorandum dated April 17, and the membership of the Board in a Memorandum dated April 20, 1970, which are reproduced in the summary volume of the report you have received.

The past two months have involved long hours and very hard work by the Review Board and supporting

elements in NASA and the industrial community. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to them for the thoroughness of their investigation and their dedication to this arduous assignment.

Since I received the Review Board report only this morning, I have not had a chance to review it in detail. Nor have I had the benefit of an independent assessment by the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel, chaired by Dr. Charles Harrington. The Office of Manned Space Flight will also conduct a separate review of the report. In about ten days I will receive the comments of the Safety Panel and Manned Space Flight. Until I have received and studied these reports, I will obviously not be in a position to give you my evaluation of the Board's recommendations or NASA's future actions.

Earlier we did announce a change in our plans involving a delay of the Apollo 14 launch from October to the December launch window. However, this is subject to review in light of the report and we will not fly

Apollo 14 to the moon until we are confident that we have done everything necessary to eliminate the conditions that caused or contributed to the problems on Apollo 13.

I believe that, as we plan man's future course in space, the Preface to this report should be a reminder of the nature of the challenge we have undertaken. Let me quote:

"The Apollo 13 accident, which aborted man's third mission to explore the surface of the moon, is a harsh reminder of the immense difficulty of this undertaking.

"The total Apollo system of ground complexes, launch vehicle, and spacecraft constitutes the most ambitious and demanding engineering development ever undertaken by man. For these missions to succeed, both men and equipment must perform to near perfection. That this system has already resulted in two successful lunar surface explorations is a tribute to those men and women who conceived, designed, built, and flew it.

"Perfection is not only difficult to achieve, but difficult to maintain. The imperfection in Apollo 13 constituted a near disaster, averted only by outstanding performance on the part of the crew and the ground control team which supported them.

"The Board feels that the nature of the Apollo 13 equipment failure holds important lessons which, when applied to future missions, will contribute to the safety and effectiveness of manned space flight."

There has been time for me to reach one conclusion on the Report of the Apollo 13 Review Board, and that is that the Board has done a magnificent piece of technical detective work that carefully reconstructs the events which took place aboard Apollo 13 in fractions of a second 200,000 miles from earth. I would like now to introduce the Chairman of the Review Board, Mr. Edgar Cortright, who will discuss the Report and respond to your questions.
